



*A riparian buffer or “buffer strip” is a vegetated area (usually forested) near a stream, which helps shade and partially protect a stream from the impact of adjacent land uses. Riparian buffers play a key role in enhancing water quality in associated streams, rivers, and lakes, thus providing environmental benefits. With the decline of many aquatic ecosystems due to farming, land development, etc., riparian buffers have become a common conservation practice aimed at improving water quality and reducing pollution.*



**Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance (LEWPA)**

c/o Erie County Department of Environment and Planning  
95 Franklin Street, Room 1077  
Buffalo, New York 14202

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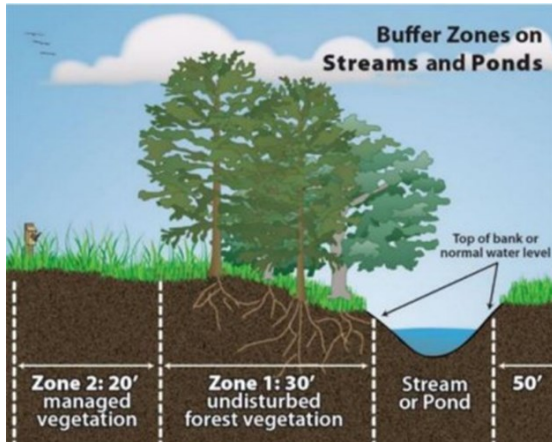


## **KEEP OUR LAKES & WATERWAYS CLEAN**

### **Establishing and Preserving Riparian Buffers**

Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance





Source: N.C. Department of Environmental Quality Sustainability

**Cross Section of a typical Riparian Buffer**

## Buffers Protect Our Lakes & Waterways

Buffers protect near-stream soils from over-bank flows, trap harmful chemicals or sediment transported by surface and subsurface flows from adjacent land uses, or provide shade, detritus and large woody debris for the in-stream ecosystem.

Buffers provide a transitional zone between the stream and the adjoining land that softens the impact of lakes and waterways during high flow events.

One of the greatest challenges with reestablishing lakeside and streamside buffers is changing the way people think and use their property. Cutting trees, removing brush, mowing or farming to the edge of the banks quickly results in bank instability and the loss of soil and property. Remediating streambanks and lakeshores is expensive. It makes more sense to either leave natural buffers in place or allow buffers to naturally revegetate.



**Establishing a Riparian Buffer** This reach of Goose Creek in Ashville, New York was experiencing severe streambank erosion. Funding from the Chautauqua County 2% Occupancy Grant Program for Lakes & Waterways was used to stabilize the streambank and plant a hybrid willow species to rapidly establish a riparian buffer. The photograph on the left was taken after construction in October of 2014 and the photograph on the right was taken in June of 2016.



**Erosion along Goose Creek due to the loss of the Riparian Buffer**

## Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance

Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, and Erie counties working together to protect our water resources.

[www.erie.gov/lewpa](http://www.erie.gov/lewpa)

